

THE THEATRE AND SOME OF ITS PEOPLE



David Warfield, who will be seen again as the beloved von Barwig in "The Music Master." The famous play will reopen at the Knickerbocker on Tuesday.

IN WIGS AND WINGS

Real Folk Getting a Chance in Some of the Recent Plays.

By HEYWOOD BROWN.

REGULAR folk are beginning to get on the stage. For this invasion of flesh-and-blood people "Bunker Bean" should receive chief credit and, in lesser measure, "Under Sentence." The novel of Harry Leon Wilson makes no great play, but at least it affords the theatregoer a chance to see glints of life now and again in the theatrical atmosphere, which has grown so murky with unreality.

Of course, there is no such person as the Pops of Charles Abbe, but it would be possible to find some one who at least resembled him. If the stage is to be won back from utter theatricality to a proper intimacy with life it is just as well that it should be done by easy stages. Caricature marks a step in the right direction.

Pops, Bunker, the Flapper and the rest prove that audiences can be interested in types which may be exaggerated, but are not distorted. "Under Sentence" deserves honorable mention for the figure of John W. Blake, which affords George Nash an opportunity to do the most interesting work of his career. Mr. Blake does a number of absurd things. It would undoubtedly be impossible to find fleshly sanction for the scene in which the financier tells his fellow director to go upstairs and shoot himself or for the other scene in which he pushes a woman caller into a vault and throws the key away, but the manner, the working philosophy and the words of the man are true, or at least near enough true to be worth while.

A READER whose initials are "W. F." is much put out because, on the whole we liked "The Intruder." He objects to it for many reasons, among them "vulgarity," which the play certainly does not possess, but chiefly he hated the play because it was "stale." The theme of "The Intruder" is old, but that is not necessarily against it. It is trite but true that Shakespeare sought old plots in preference to new ones. Even Mr. Shaw did not disdain to try his hand at a triangle play, and in "Candida" he devised, not his best, but

GEORGE NASH GOES TO PRISON



The Strong Man of the New Cobb-Mcgrue Drama, "Under Sentence."

immeasurably his most popular play. If a story is old it has attained its age because it is good. We think that the quality of the American drama will improve when there is closer observation of American life and character. We hope that men will arise who have a fresh point of view in regard to life, but we don't think it will make much difference whether their plots are old or new.

"The Intruder," of course, is a drama of a school which probably has had its day, but there is no speaking dogmatically about plays. Anybody who can't abide Sardou ought not to expect any fun out of "The Intruder," but, on the other hand, there is much in it to please those who are interested, either consciously or unconsciously, in the mechanics of the drama.

OUR advice is requested by a reader who can see only one play and wants to know which it should be. The problem is difficult. Neither age nor sex is stated. Of course, one might play it safe and say "The Boomerang," but undoubtedly even such an occasional theatregoer as our subscriber has seen that.

The task would be much easier if we knew in what company X expects to attend the playhouse. With a brother of undergraduate age or thereabouts "Turn to the Right" would undoubtedly prove satisfactory. For a grandmother "Hush!" might be recommended. "Arms and the Girl" will do nicely for X and a feminine friend, but a business associate might prefer "Bunker Bean." Over eight and less than five will find "Pollyanna" to his liking, but if the inquirer intends to take the one he or she loves it should be "Pierrot the Prodigious."

MOSTLY we don't mind so much the letters in which subscribers speak ill of us, but at last a conscientious objector has pierced our skin. According to a letter printed in last week's Tribune, J. A. R. has always wondered at the accuracy with which we "reflected the judgment of the average theatregoer." Such a blow we think is below the belt.

AN EXAMPLE of the manner in which a wordless scene may be carried off effectively is furnished in that part of "Bunker Bean" in which the Flapper discovers the mummy. Florence Shirley does this with great skill.

WE DON'T know whether it's advancing age or what not, but there seem to be more efficient young actresses on the stage this season than we remember for ever so long. Fay Bainter, of "Arms and the Girl," is one of them.

GEORGE TYLER always believes in his own shows, and he is proprietor of "Pollyanna." When he fell and seriously injured his arm last week he rose in triumph and murmured: "I'm glad. I'm glad I only broke my arm. It might have been my hat."

THE RELATIVE whom William Hodge rescues in "Fixing Sister" is considerable gambler. She informs her brother in the first act that she and her friends are going to participate in a "no-limit bridge game."

F. A. FURNISHES us with an objection to a sentence we wrote concerning "Upstairs and Down." We said, "Juliet Day gave an aggravating performance as Alice." Well, in the strict letter of grammar we are wrong, as usual, but consider the spirit of the thing. The character of a Baby Vampire in an affront. The injury is intensified by the manner in which Miss Day plays the part.



Estelle Winwood, heroine of the inner play in Miss Pearn's comedy "Hush!" It is the attraction at Mr. Ames's exclusive Little Theatre.

And One of Them Is French.

"LE POILE," to-morrow evening, at the Garrick. It is a French war play, played in French, and acted, for the most part, by a French company. Lucien Bonheur is the producer, being associated in the venture with the Shuberts. It is the story of a French girl who "adopts" a soldier, with the inevitable love complications. It is promised that the piece is replete with the military atmosphere.

The principal parts will be played by Madeleine D'Espinoir, of the Opera Comique, Paris, and Jeanne Maubourg, of the Metropolitan Opera House. The leading male role will be in the hands of Andre Bellon, who played the part in Paris, and many others of the original cast will be seen. Also present will be an American girl, Belle Ashlyn.

"THE MUSIC MASTER," Tuesday evening, at the Knickerbocker. It is eight years since David Warfield has acted it. When it was produced twelve years ago it was successful and phenomenal, and Mr. Warfield played in it for four straight years—a large part of the time in New York. Apparently he might have played it forever, but the part of Von Barwig was eventually abandoned for other roles. Last year, however, a tour with "Van Der Decken" convinced Mr. Belasco that the piece was not yet in proper shape, and so "The Music Master" comes back. Charles Klein, unfortunately, is not here to witness the revival.

Many of the original players have been secured for the revival, the cast including Charles Abbott, Tony Bevan, Louis Hendricks, Auguste Aramini, Francis Gaillard, Edward Moller, William Boag, Griffith Lusk, H. G. Carleton, Pickering Brown, Thomas Gilbert, Willie Battista, Jane Cooper, Helen Weer, Eleanor Barry, Rose Saltonstall, Gertrude Valentine and Marie Bates.

It is announced that the engagement is limited to eight weeks.

CERTAIN FACTS ABOUT THE FLAPPER

YOU KNOW The Flapper, of course. If you don't, she is the heroine of Harry Leon Wilson's "Bunker Bean"—also Lee Wilson Dodd's "Bunker Bean." And if you do, why, she is, anyhow.

She is also Florence Shirley. Miss Shirley, when the piece came to the Astor last Monday, came within the proverbial ace of taking the honors away from such veteran performers as Taylor Holmes and Charles Abbe. Like Fay Bainter, just around the corner in "Arms and the Girl," Miss Shirley got her training in stock and is now playing her first part in the metropolis.

Exclusive of "Bunker Bean," Miss Shirley has played in just one company—John Craig's organization in Boston. Until the present season Mr. Craig has been conducting one of the leading stock companies of the country at the Castle Square; this year, enticed by the prospect of being a Shakespearean star, he gave it up.

Now, it happens that Mr. Dodd, who made a play out of "Bunker," also talks about the drama once a week at Smith College, Northampton, Mass. Along about the time that "Bunker" was published Dodd discussed the story, simultaneously mentioning the fact that he hoped to make a play out of it. He also took occasion to explain the scenes and to give his idea of how the characters should be played. And while he was describing The Flapper a young woman popped up and said that she knew just the person for the part. She was Florence Shirley, said the young woman, and she was playing in John Craig's company over in Boston. Mr. Dodd made a note of the name.

Well, the scene now changes. The play is written and accepted, and Dodd and Joseph Brooks are discussing the cast. The matter of The Flapper being up for consideration, Mr.

Brooks inquired if Mr. Dodd had ever heard of Florence Shirley. He didn't think he had—no, wait a minute! Where's that note-book? Shirley—Shirley—sounds familiar—sure enough! here it is! Florence Shirley. One of his girls at Smith had recommended her for the part.

So Florence Shirley is The Flapper. And the unknown young woman at Smith, who should have been richly rewarded for her part in the affair, probably is to-day working as secretary to some heartless millionaire at \$18 a week.

War Play in Italian.

Arturo Giovannitti desires to establish a permanent Italian playhouse in this city, and his first step in that direction will be taken on Tuesday evening, when "Tenebre Rosse," an Italian drama in three acts, will be presented at the People's Theatre. Literally translated, the title means "As It Was in the Beginning," but this has been abandoned in favor of "Red Darkness." The piece is said to be a sensational indictment of the war. Mimi Aguilera will be the star. The theatre is at 291 Bowery, and the programme will contain a synopsis in English for the benefit of those who prefer that language.

The Unneutral Drama.

"Will und Weibke," which opened at the Bandbox on Thursday, will continue to be the attraction at that theatre during the coming week. "Wei Einst im Mai," similarly, will be held over at the Irving Place. New productions are in preparation for both houses.

Standard Theatre.

"Hobson's Choice," Harold Brighouse's quaint comedy of Lancashire life, will be presented this week at the Standard.



Florence Shirley is The Flapper in "Bunker Bean." Harry Leon Wilson's story has been turned into a highly entertaining play.

AROUND AND ABOUT

By GEORGE S. KAUFMAN.

DISPATCHES from Detroit, which was the scene of the opening of George Cohan's new play on Monday, indicate that the play is a departure both for Mr. Cohan and Mr. Olcott. The only link connecting the present Olcott role with his oldtime romantic heroes is the fact that Mr. Olcott again plays an Irishman. In "Honest John O'Brien" he is a man who has been a professional gambler all his life, but who elects to retire after making a fortune in Bethlehem Steel. The complications of the play follow upon his retirement.

"In this play," according to one Detroit reviewer, "Mr. Cohan has departed from the recognized Cohanese style and addressed himself with penetrating intelligence and mastery skill to the production of a drama that bears the seal of realism, in the sense that it is a slice from life. His dramatic personae are not asked to do the improbable, and he has given them many sparkling lines to speak—sentiments that are of the hour and that pertain directly to the business in hand on the stage. One may even say that the writing is Shakespearean, in that the several characters speak for themselves and never descend to the mere mouthpieces of the dramatist."

One of the characters in the play is a theatrical manager said to be made up for the late Charles Frohman. The part is played by George Sidney, who also played a theatrical manager in "The Show Shop."

There is at hand a photograph of Woodrow Wilson and Thomas H. Ince, showing the former in the act of shaking hands with the latter, and it is said, congratulating him upon the success of "Civilization." The picture is a good one, except that the camera was quite obviously all out of focus. President Wilson, on the photograph, looms up as large as Mr. Ince.

In "Mister Antonio" Otis Skinner is playing not only his first Italian role, but his first dialect part. Between acts at the Lyceum, while his dresser painted two loving hearts on his right arm, Mr. Skinner explained that his knowledge of Italian, despite one or two trips to Italy, is based largely upon observation of the manners and customs of his gardener at Bryn Mawr. He has copied the gardener faithfully in every respect but one, and it is the regret of his life that he is unable to copy him in that respect. For the gardener, like most unskilled laborers in the English language, is most naive in his use of profanity—splendid, virile, real profanity. Mr. Skinner wanted to sprinkle a little of it in "Mister Antonio," but Booth Tarkington and others finally persuaded him to listen to reason.

Miss Fay Bainter has lately descended on Broadway, and laid hold upon it, and forced it to confess that it is hers. Miss Bainter plays half the title role of "Arms and the Girl," at the Fulton. Since the premiere many persons have been wondering whether she had played in New York before, as well as the other things that people wonder about newcomers.

Miss Bainter hails from Los Angeles. She is twenty-two, and has been acting steadily ever since she was four. At fourteen she was ingenue of a Seattle stock company. At seventeen she came to New York, hunted a job, and failed to find it. So

she started back across the country, and landed in Toledo. There she played a stock season. Then she came again to New York, and after many heart-breaking weeks, secured an engagement in Mrs. Fiske's company.

But Mrs. Fiske played only on the road that season, so the New York engagement was still in the future. There followed a period of stock in Albany, and then a long period in Des Moines. By that time Miss Bainter had played in almost every play ever written. Last spring she came to New York again, having saved enough money to enable her to continue indefinitely the search for a New York engagement. As you are about to guess, she found her opportunity in "Arms and the Girl."

The moral of this is that hard work does not necessarily keep one from having a successful career on the stage.

There is a scene in Willie Collier's face in which his fiancée asks him if he had ever loved any other girl. He is compelled, as you may be aware, to tell the truth. He says: "Yes." Then comes "Who was it?" and he replies "Maude Adams."

A few evenings ago Lillian Russell sat in a box at the Longacre, and Collier gallantly changed the line. The performance was held up for two minutes, and Mrs. Moore very nearly had to arise and take a bow.

Incidentally, Mr. Collier's interest in baseball has not diminished since it was mentioned in these columns several weeks ago. There will be no Wednesday matinee at the Longacre during the coming week, the reason being that the star of the attraction will be at Ebbets Field. Mr. Collier, as he has done before when sporting events threatened to interfere with pleasure, has bought the entire house for the matinee.

New York theatres are expensive, of course, and every inch of space inside of them is valuable. The present system of construction is to be lavish in the matter of stage and auditorium and to stretch when it comes to putting in an elevator. Of the elevators which ascend to the offices in New York theatres not more than one or two of them boasts a footage of over ten or a dozen square feet. If a passenger is at all bulky it is frequently necessary for the operator to make a couple of trips.

The opening date of "So Long, Letty," has been changed again. Now it is October 30, and this time the date is definite and final. The Shuberts is the theatre in view, which means that "The Girl from Brazil" will join the growing number of attractions which are "looking for a New York theatre."

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